



NBME

National Board of Medical Examiners
3750 Market Street
Philadelphia, PA 19104-3102

215-590-9500 phone
www.nbme.org

Confidential

October 6, 2016

Sara K. Whyte
127 Hart Ave
Athens, GA 30606

RE: USMLE Step 2 CK

USMLE ID#: 5-316-720-1

Dear Ms. Whyte:

We have thoroughly reviewed the documentation provided in support of your request for test accommodations for the United States Medical Licensing Examination (USMLE) Step 2 Clinical Knowledge (CK). We conducted an individualized review of your request in accordance with the guidelines set forth in the amended Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

You report the basis of your request to be Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) diagnosed in 1988 and Major Depressive Disorder, Mild diagnosed in 2015. In your recent personal statement you write, *“Schools I have attended granted me an accommodation of time and half on a test which is exactly how much time I need. I find that I finish an exam in the exact amount of time they give me with no need to reread... A professor of mine took me under his wing and once or twice a week he would go over practice exams with me and help me figure out why I was missing so many questions. Working with him I learned that I knew the material but was not able to express that on a test without time accommodations. In fact, upon rereading the questions at a normal pace the correct answers were clear to me. We determined that the critical factor between success and failure were the issues of time and a quiet environment...I know that most residencies use this score to determine the knowledge and skills of a prospective resident. However, I and my professors feel that my current score does not represent me well. After a lot of talk with my school advisors I came to the conclusion that I should apply for accommodations for Step 2 (CK)...Through all my experiences and based on all the batteries of psychological tests I have taken, I clearly need these accommodations to accurately show my knowledge and skills to residencies and to assure that I do not need to take another year off to study for this exam.”*

Received with your request was a March 2015 report of Diagnostic Summary and Recommendations signed by Scott E. Miller, Ph.D. at the University of Georgia Regents' Center for Learning Disorders and two students; Cutter A. Lindbergh, M.A. and Emily S. Hallowell, M.A. They report that you presented for evaluation to establish if you are eligible for academic accommodations for disabilities as allowed by the Georgia Board of Regents and to aid you in understanding your cognitive, language, academic, and social/emotional functioning. Your evaluators write, *“Sara Whyte is a 33-year-old, second year medical student at the GRU/UGA Medical Partnership with a GPA of 2.3 and SAT scores of 640 Verbal and 640 Math. Mrs. Whyte had prior diagnoses that included learning disabilities and an attention disorder. She reported current difficulties with reading, understanding directions, and retaining information that is not repeated...She indicated that she has recently been under a great*

amount of stress as the result of her preparation for her STEP exam, explaining that her study schedule has limited her social contact, disrupted her sleep patterns, and caused her to feel emotionally and physically fatigued.” Your evaluators administered a battery of tests and conclude, “Based on self-report, informant-report, and her overall pattern of test performance, Mrs. Whyte met criteria for Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), inattentive type (DSM-5, 314.00). Relative to her high average overall ability as well as the general population, Mrs. Whyte exhibited an academic deficit in reading efficiency, which involves reading rate and the understanding of text-based passages under timed condition. The presence of this deficit is consistent with Mrs. Whyte’s attentional difficulties related to ADHD. Mrs. Whyte also met diagnostic criteria for Major Depressive Disorder (MDD; DSM-5, 296.31). Although Mrs. Whyte was previously diagnosed with a learning disorder, her pattern of tests results based on the current evaluation suggests that she no longer meets criteria for a learning disorder diagnosis.”

The conclusions of your evaluator notwithstanding, your 2015 performances on a range of cognitive and academic tasks including attention, processing speed, working memory, and timed reading comprehension are well within the range of average functioning and do not demonstrate impairments that limit any major life activity. For example, consistent with your 2009 evaluation, your 2015 *Nelson-Denny Reading Test (NDRT)* timed reading comprehension was Average range, better than 30% of a national sample of college educated peers. Furthermore, neither you nor your evaluators describe current symptoms of depression, and your evaluators do not discuss how you currently meet diagnostic criteria for any psychiatric disorder.

The ADA defines disability as a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities. Accommodations are intended to provide access to the USMLE testing program for individuals with a documented disability as defined by the ADA. A diagnostic label, in and of itself, does not establish coverage under the ADA, nor does prior receipt of accommodations for a particular activity guarantee that identical accommodations are indicated or will be available in all future settings and circumstances. The ADA covers individuals who are substantially limited in a major life activity. Determination of whether an individual is substantially limited in functioning as compared to most people is based on assessment of the current impact of the identified impairment.

Your documentation does not demonstrate a substantial limitation in a major life activity as compared to most people or that the requested accommodations are an appropriate modification of your USMLE Step 2 CK test administration. Therefore, after a thorough review of all of your documentation, I must inform you that we are unable to provide you with the requested accommodations.

We will advise Applicant Services to process your exam application without test accommodations. You may inquire at usmlereg@nbme.org or call Applicant Services directly at (215) 590-9700 with any questions about your scheduling permit.

Sincerely,



Catherine Farmer, Psy.D.
Director, Disability Services
ADA Compliance Officer, Testing Programs